

Some nests were so loosely woven that the eggs could be seen through the side of the nest. Full clutches of eggs varied from two to four. The eggs were rounded ovals with some gloss: pale bluish-green (*pale sulphate green*, Ridgway) more or less heavily speckled and spotted with mauve, dark olive green and black. Measurements of ten eggs: 16—17.9 x 12.2—13.4 mm.

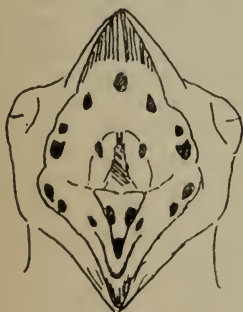
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The mouth-markings of the nestlings of *Amandava subflava* (Vieill.)

by C. J. O. HARRISON

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The nestlings of the Estrildidae possess distinctive patterns of black spots or lines on the inside of the mouth, which vary from one species to another. These patterns have been used as taxonomic characters by Delacour (1943), and to a greater extent by Steiner (1960) who published diagrams of the markings of thirty species. These markings would appear to be highly variable and probably only of taxonomic value as additional characters in certain species. I was recently able, through the kindness of A. Hayes, able to examine the mouth-markings of a brood of young of *Amandava subflava* which had died in the nest at 7–8 day old. Delacour states that the markings of this species have been recorded, but he does not



A. subflava



A. amandava

comment on them when discussing taxonomic relationships. Steiner describes the markings of his tribe Amandavae but his description appears to be based only on *A. amandava*.

In the accompanying sketches I have compared the mouth-pattern of *A. subflava* with that of *A. amandava* as shown by Steiner. The two drawings are not of course to scale. The resemblance between the two patterns is very close indeed and, in view of the variation of such markings from one species to another, could be considered to indicate a close relationship. They differ in that the uppermost spot of *A. subflava* is single and not double, and there are only two markings on the lower edge of the gape. I find that there is also a small black mark in the middle of the underside of the tongue.

References:

- Delacour, J. 1943. A revision of the subfamily Estrildinae of the Ploceidae. *Zoologica*, N.Y. 28: 69-81.
- Steiner, H. 1960. Klassifikation der Prachtfinken, Spermerididae, auf Grund der Rachenzeichnungen ihrer Nestlinge. *J. Orn.* 101: 92-112.

***Bradypterus barratti major* (Roberts) 1922**
pre-occupied by *Bradypterus major* (Brooks) 1872

by P. A. CLANCEY AND H. E. WOLTERS

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In the *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. viii, 4, 1922, p. 234, Austin Roberts proposed a new race of Scrub Warbler *Bradypterus barratti* (Sharpe) under the name *Caffrillas barratti major*, the Type from Wakkerstroom, on the Transvaal/Natal border. This taxon has generally been admitted as valid by systematic workers, and is listed in Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 78; Clancey, *Bull. B.O.C.*, vol. 75, 4, 1955, pp. 38-44; and McLachlan and Liversidge, *Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, 1957, p. 323, in the combination *Bradypterus barratti major* (Roberts), 1922.

The name *major* cannot, however, be used for a South African *Bradypterus*, as it is pre-occupied by *Bradypterus major* (Brooks), 1872; Kashmir (*Dumeticola major* Brooks, *Journ. Asiatic Soc. Bengal*, vol. xli, p. 77) a form occasionally placed in *Tribura* Hodgson, a genus now admitted by workers as being synonymous with *Bradypterus* Swainson, 1837. Incidentally, Vaurie, *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, vol. i, 1959, p. 299, lists *Tribura* as a subgenus, but treats *Dumeticola major* as *Bradypterus major*.

Arising from the above finding, another name will be required for *B. b. major* (Roberts). Two names have been given to Natal populations of this warbler, namely, *Bradypterus* (*Caffrillas*) *barratti wilsoni* Roberts, 1933: Kloof, Natal, and *Bradypterus barratti cathkinensis* Vincent, 1948: near Cathkin Peak and the Mahlabachaneng Pass, Giants' Castle Game Reserve, Natal. In the review of the races of *B. barratti* by one of us (P. A. C. [*loc. cit.*]), both *B. b. wilsoni* and *B. b. cathkinensis* were placed as synonyms of *B. b. godfreyi* (Roberts), 1922: Pirie, eastern Cape Province. A re-examination of material of the Natal populations confirms that *B. b. wilsoni* is indistinguishable from *B. b. godfreyi*, but that *B. b. cathkinensis* is applicable to populations which are colder and greyer brown on the upper parts and clearer grey, less olive tinged, over the breast and lateral body surfaces. On the basis of fresh material, it now seems that there is no valid racial difference between the populations of this warbler occurring in the high parts of Griqualand East, the western escarpment and upper districts of Natal, and those found in the Wakkerstroom district, of the south-eastern Transvaal, which results in Vincent's *B. b. cathkinensis* (*vide Bull. B.O.C.*, vol. lxix, 2, 1948, p. 18) becoming available as the correct name for *B. b. major* (Roberts), pre-occupied.*

The range of *B. b. godfreyi* has now been determined as from the eastern Cape Province, through Pondoland and coastal and midland Natal to Zululand, north as far as the Lebombo Range.

* In the light of these findings the recently proposed name *Bradypterus barratti lysis* Parker, *Bull. B.O.C.*, 82, p. 122 (1962), becomes a synonym of *Bradypterus barratti cathkinensis* Vincent.